WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT COVID-19

What is coronavirus (COVID-19)?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. Risk of infection with COVID-19 is higher for people who are close contacts of someone known to have COVID-19, for example healthcare workers, or household members. Other people at higher risk for infection are those who live in or have recently been in an area with large numbers of COVID-19 caes.

How does COVID-19 spread?

It's believed the virus spreads mainly between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through the cough or sneeze of an infected person (as well as coming in contact with an infected person's saliva through sharing utensils, cups, etc). It also may be possible, but not as common, to get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own face.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of:

■fever ■ cough ■ shortness of breath

What are COVID-19 complications?

More than 80% of people who get COVID-19 will have mild illness. Some will have moderate or severe symptoms and may develop pneumonia in both lungs, multi-organ failure and in some cases death. Those over 60 years of age or with chronic conditions such as heart disease or diabetes are at greater risk of developing moderate or severe symptoms.

How can I help protect myself?

People can help protect themselves from respiratory illness with regular preventive actions.

■ Avoid close contact with people who are sick. ■ Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.

■ Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

If you are sick, to keep from spreading respiratory illness to others, you should:
■ Stay home when you are sick. ■ Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue & throw the tissue in the trash. ■ Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

What should I do if I've been to area where there are a lot of COVID-19 cases?

If you have traveled from an affected area, you may be asked to self-monitor, quarantine or practice "social distancing" for up to 2 weeks. If you develop symptoms during that period (fever, cough, trouble breathing), call your doctor's office and tell them about your travel and your symptoms. They will give you instructions on how to get care without exposing other people to your illness. While sick, avoid contact with people, don't go out, and delay any travel to reduce the possibility of spreading illness to others.

Is there a vaccine?

There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to take everyday preventive actions, like avoiding close contact with people who are sick and washing your hands often.

Is there a treatment?

There is no specific antiviral treatment for COVID-19. People with COVID-19 can seek medical care to help relieve symptoms. The majority of people who contract COVID-19 will recover fully and may only experience mild symptoms. Unless people have severe symptoms or underlying health conditions, they will likely be told to recover at home.

For more information visit www.cdc.gov/COVID19

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If you are sick with COVID-19 or suspect you are infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, follow these steps to help prevent spreading the disease to people in your home and community.

Stay home except to get medical care
Stay home unless you need to get medical care. Do not go to work, school, or public areas. Avoid using public transportation, ride-sharing, or taxis.

Separate yourself from other people and animals in your home
People: As much as possible, stay in one room and away from other people in your home. You should use a separate bathroom, if available.

Animals: Do not handle pets or other animals while sick. (more info on the CDC website)

Call ahead before visiting your doctor
If you have a medical appointment, call your healthcare provider and tell them that you have or may have COVID-19. This will help their office take steps to keep other people from getting infected or exposed.

Wear a facemask
You should wear a facemask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) or pets and before you enter a healthcare provider's office. If you are not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then people who live with you should stay out of the room you are in or wear a facemask if they enter your room.

Cover your coughs and sneezes
Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw used tissues in a lined trash can; immediately clean your hands according to the instructions below.

Clean your hands often
Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water should be used if hands are visibly dirty. Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.

Avoid sharing personal household items
Do not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people or pets in your home. Wash these thoroughly with soap and water after use.

Clean all "high-touch" surfaces every day
High touch surfaces include counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables. Also, clean any surfaces that may have blood, stool, or body fluids on them. Use a household cleaning spray or wipe, following the label instructions. Labels contain important information for using the product effectively and safely.

Monitor your symptoms
Seek medical attention if your illness is getting worse (e.g., difficulty breathing). Before seeking care, call your healthcare provider and tell them that you have, or are being evaluated for, COVID-19 and follow their instructions closely. If you have a medical emergency and need to call 911, notify the dispatch personnel that you have, or are being evaluated for COVID-19. Follow the dispatcher's instructions closely.

Discontinuing home isolation
Patients with confirmed COVID-19 should remain under home isolation precautions until the risk of giving the virus to others is thought to be low. The decision to discontinue home isolation precautions should be made on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments.

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